

WI-565  
St. John's United Methodist Church  
Fruitland  
Public worship

1899, 1917, 1937, 1958

Central to the history of Fruitland is the organization and development of St. John's United Methodist Church. Located in the heart of the city is a multi-sectioned Gothic Revival frame and stone structure assembled in several building programs between 1899 and 1958. Centered in the composite structure is the 1899 gable-roofed frame church, which is defined by pointed arch windows introduced in a 1917 remodeling. Introduced as well in 1917 were several dramatic alterations including a multi-storied entrance and bell tower on the northwest corner, a story-and-a-half frame wing to the west that originally housed additional congregational seating, and a complete redesign of the new sanctuary to face a new altar on the southeast side. Twenty years later, in 1937, the sanctuary was redesigned and enlarged again with pews redistributed to face southwest where a new pulpit and memorial window were installed. Lastly, during the 1950s, the frame church was sheathed with permastone and brick as well as enlarged with a Sunday School addition on the east side.

Initially organized in 1849, the St. John's Methodist Episcopal congregation worshipped in a Greek Revival church erected the following year. Built with a Greek temple front, the rectangular frame church was entered on its principal façade through tall paneled doors framed by a neoclassical surround. Long sash windows flanked by louvered shutters lighted the single room interior. The lot on which the church was erected was conveyed by the executors of John B. Slemons to Levin T. H. Irving on May 13, 1854. The deed conveyed, "all that lot near Forktown, Somerset County, where the Methodist Episcopal church of the said Town stands."

The Greek Revival church served the St. John's congregation for nearly fifty years when proposals were submitted for remodeling the church in a style compatible with the Gothic taste popular at the turn of the century. The pastor at the time, Reverend William E. Matthews,

related to the trustees that the old structure of the church is of the style of 50 years ago and in need of repairs and that the last repairs were not adequate to the current use. Instead of altered the 1850 structure, it was decided to erect an entirely new church with a steeply pitched roof, pointed arch windows, and a corner entrance and bell tower with a pyramidal spire.

Inventory No. WI-565

Number of Contributing Resources:  
previously listed in the Inventory

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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. WI-565

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

St. John's United Methodist Church, historically known as St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, stands on the south side of East Main Street in the center of Fruitland, Wicomico County, Maryland. The multi-sectioned frame, brick and stone church faces northeast with the principal gable roof oriented on a northeast/southwest axis. Joining the church on the property is a large nineteenth- and twentieth-century cemetery that includes a metal fence on the East Main Street boundary as well as several private metal fences that surround specific family plots.

The present church dates from several periods of construction between 1899 and 1958. Part of the single-story, gable roofed section which houses the main sanctuary was built in 1899-1900. In 1916-17 the 1899 church was extensively reconfigured with a repositioning of the steeple, additions to the east and west along with a complete reworking of the sanctuary so that the pews faced southeast rather than southwest. Twenty years later, in 1936-37, the interior was redesigned again with the orientation of the pews to face southwest and the addition on the west side was converted into Sunday School rooms. Lastly, in 1958, the frame church was sheathed with permastone, a spire and belfry was erected atop the steeple, and a brick and a stone-veneered addition was built on the east side of the 1899 structure.

The northeast elevation is an asymmetrical façade with the gable-front of the 1899 church pierced by a tripartite colored glass window that is flanked by single lancet windows filled with colored glass. The edge of the roof has an extended eave sheathed with aluminum. The front wall, along with a large portion of the church, is covered with permastone. Attached to the northwest corner of the 1899 church is a three-story entrance and bell tower assembled in stages between 1917 and 1958. Pointed arch windows filled with colored glass survive from the 1917 design, whereas the balance of the entrance tower was modified with the exterior sheathing of permastone and the addition of a tapered spire that houses a belfry. To the west of the 1899 sanctuary is a 1917 story-and-a-half wing sheathed with permastone as well. There is a marble datestone fixed in the northwest corner inscribed St. John's M. E. Church, 1916.

To the east is a two-story hip roofed Sunday School room wing built in 1958. The Sunday School room wing is covered with stone veneer and topped by a low pitched hip roof.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. WI-565

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**Specific dates** 1849

**Architect/Builder**

**Construction dates** 1899, Cornerstone dated 1916, Church reopened June 10, 1917, 1937, 1958

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

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Initially organized in 1849, the St. John's congregation worshipped in a Greek Revival church erected the following year. Built with a Greek temple front, the rectangular frame church was entered on its principal façade through tall paneled doors framed by neoclassical surround. Long sash windows flanked by louvered shutters lighted the single room interior. The lot on which the church was erected was conveyed by the executors of John B. Slemons to Levin T. H. Irving on May 13, 1854. The deed conveyed "all that lot near Forktown, Somerset County, where the Methodist Episcopal church of the said Town stands."<sup>1</sup>

The Greek Revival church served the St. John's congregation for nearly fifty years when proposals were submitted for remodeling the church in a style compatible with the Gothic taste popular at the turn of the century. The pastor at the time, Reverend William E. Matthews, related to the trustees that the old structure of the church is of the style of 50 years ago and in need of repairs and that the last repairs were not adequate to the current use.<sup>2</sup> Instead of remodeling the 1850 structure it was decided to erect an entirely new church with a steeply pitched roof, pointed arch windows, and a corner entrance and bell tower with a pyramidal spire.

<sup>1</sup> Somerset County Land Record, LW 7/97, 13 May 1854.

<sup>2</sup> *The Witness Anniversary Booklet*, St. John's Methodist Church, Fruitland, Maryland, 1954, p. 12.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WI-565

Name St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 1

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Somerset County  
Land Record  
LW 7/97

James M. Slemons, Josiah Ellingsworth, Executors of the  
Estate of John B. Slemons

to

5/13/1854

Levin T. H. Irving  
....all that lot of ground near Fork Town, Somerset County, whereon  
the Methodist Episcopal Church of said Town stands, which said lot  
of ground the said Levin purchased at a public auction at the sale made  
by the executors of the real estate of John B. Slemons...

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. WI-565

Conley, Ethel G. *A Short History of Fruitland*, Unpublished manuscript, 1971.

Hallman, E. C. *The Garden of Methodism*, Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1948.

Somerset County Land Records, various volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1 acre  
Acreage of historical setting 1 acre  
Quadrangle name Salisbury, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Private Consultant	date	7/20/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

# TRAPPE

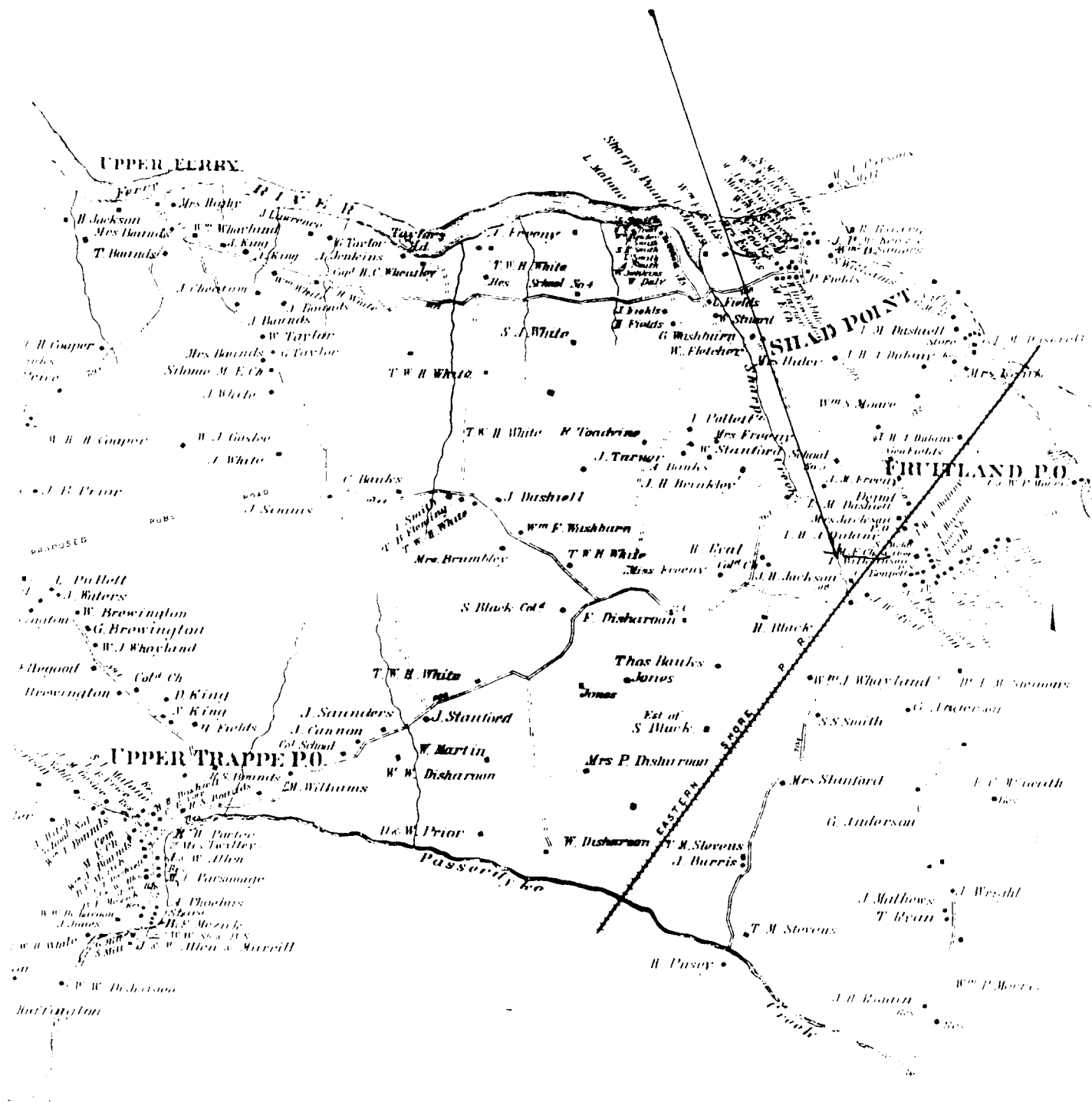
Dist.No.7

WICOMICO CO.

WI-565

St. John's United Methodist Church  
Fruitland

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas  
1877





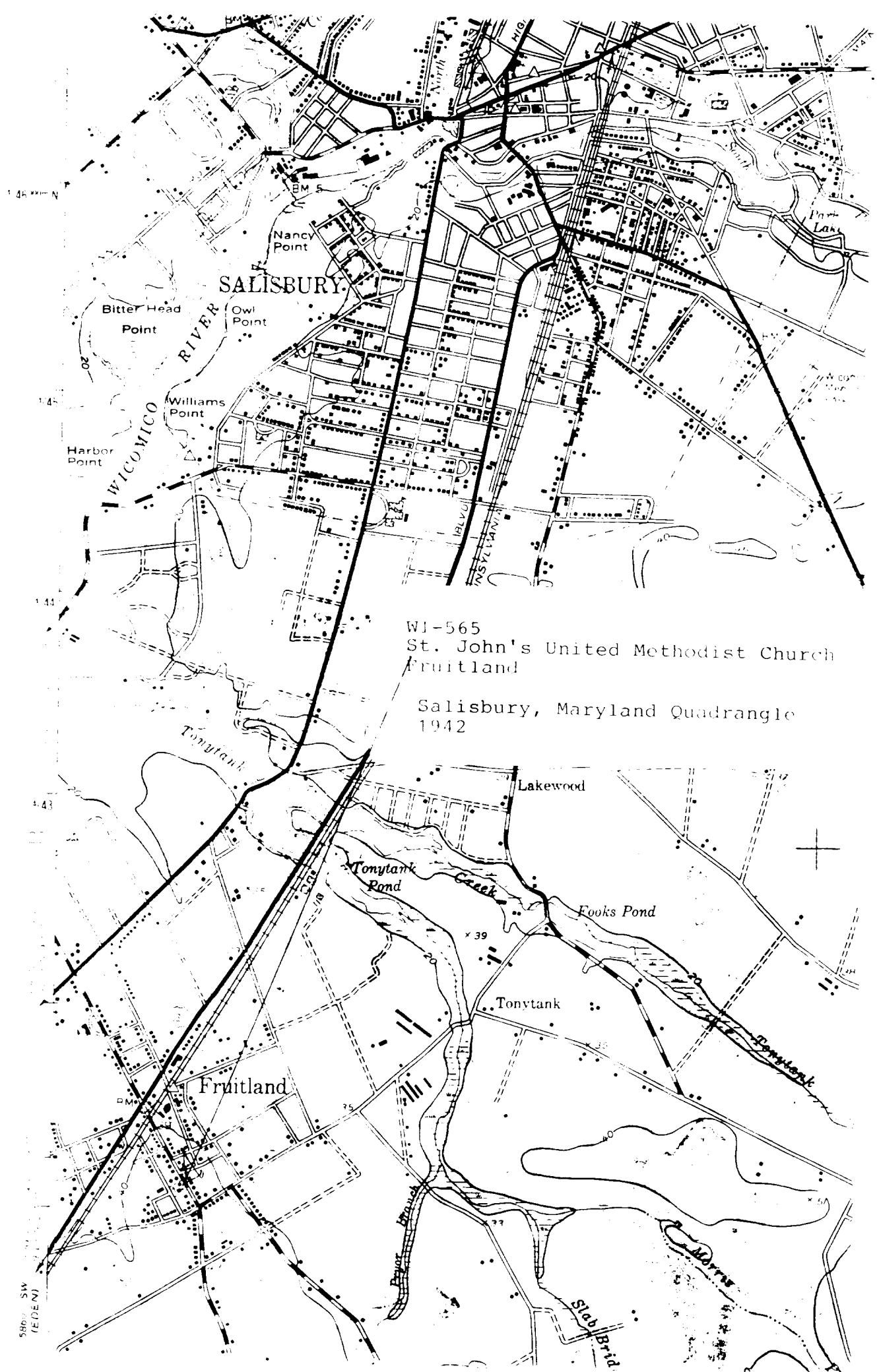
1.45 45° 15' N

1.44

1.44

1.43

5860 SW  
(EDEN)



W1-565  
St. John's United Methodist Church  
Fruitland

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle  
1942

Fruitland

Lakewood

Tonytank  
Pond

Fooks Pond

Tonytank

Slab Brid



WI-565

St. James' Church the historic Church

Frankland, Nicaragua C., No

Northwest elevation

7/01, Pan Town, PROTECTORATE

NEL. / NO. HISTORICAL TRUST

1 OF 2



W1-465

St. John's United Meth. Church  
Vernonia, Oregon Co. Mo.

NORTHERN ELEVATED

7/01, PAUL TOWERS PHOTO

NEC. / MD. Historical Trust

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